(b) As on 01.01.2005 a total 1761156 persons were on the waiting list for telephone connections. Of this total 1348624 were in the rural and 412532 in the urban areas respectively.

(c) The demand for telephone connections is an ongoing process, however, existing waiting list is likely to be cleared by December, 2006.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. As on 31.10.2005 the total number of telephone connections on Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) in rural areas were 13.5 lakh. During the year 2005-06, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has planned to provide 837000 lines of Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) telephone connections in rural areas.

Website for information on countries of the world

†1680. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to create a website for providing information pertaining to our country and other countries of the world;

(b) whether it has been also decided to launch the above site in Hindi and other regional languages; and

(c) if not, the reasons taken to provide the benefit of this facility to the far flung areas and rural areas of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) Government has established an India portal which is envisaged as an unified portal for accessing information in the Government Sector (Executive, Judiciary, Legislature and Constitutional Authorities), for electronic delivery of citizen services and as a major facilitator for implementing e-governance initiatives. This portal will have facility to support Hindi and other regional languages. This project is being implemented by the National Informatics Centre and the content is provided by the individual Ministries/Departments and State Governments.

Opening of new Post Offices in rural areas

1681. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether it is a fact that post offices located in rural areas are very less when compared to the urban areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the average area being served by a rural post office and an urban post office in the country;

(c) the number of new post offices opened in rural and urban areas of the country during each of the last two years, State-wise;

(d) whether more post offices are proposed to be opened in rural areas of the country in the near future; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No Sir, there were 1,55,516 post offices (as on 31/3/2005) throughout the country, of which approximately 89% post offices are located in rural areas. Besides 7396 Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendras (PSSKs) are also functioning in rural areas to provide basic Postal facilities.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) Post Offices are opened under Plan target and 219 post offices have been opened during the year 2003-04. Plan, targets were approved in the 10th Plan only for the first two years. The 10th Five Year Plan, *inter alia*, required the Department to rationalise its network and optimize its resources with a view to achieving financial self-sufficiency while continuing to fulfil its Universal Service Obligation. Fifty-six (56) Post Offices were opened during 2004-05 by way of relocation. Details of Post Offices opened in rural and urban areas of the country during the last two years are given in the Statement enclosed. (*See* below)

(d) and (e) Post Offices are opened subject to fulfilment of distance, population and income norms and also availability of requisite resources. In case of normal rural areas post offices are provided subsidy to the extent of 66 2/3% and in case of hilly, tribal, desert and inaccessible areas subsidy to the extent of 85% is provided.

In compliance with 10th Plan policy imperatives, Government will strive to provide post office in needy areas by rationalizing existing post offices that do not fulfil the distance norm and by redeploying existing manpower.

Statement

Circle-wise Post Offices opened in Rural and Urban areas during the last two years

Sl. No.	Circles	2003-2004		2004-2005 By relocation	
		Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
1	Andhra Pradesh	2	1	nil	3
2	Assam	14	1	2	nil
3	Bihar	15	1	1	nil
4	Chhattisgarh	16	1	nil	nil
5	Delhi	1	nil	nil	nil
6	Gujarat	9	1	6	2
7	Haryana	2	1	nil	nil
8	Himachal Pradesh	2	1	nil	nil
9	Jammu & Kashmir	7	1	nil	nil
10	Jharkhand	6	1	nil	1
11	Karnataka	4	1	3	3
12	kerala	6	1	2	3
13	Madhya Pradesh	15	1	nil	nil
14	Maharashtra	25	2	nil	2
15	North East	10	1	nil	3
16	Orissa	6	1	nil	3
17	Punjab	5	nil	nil	10
18	Rajasthan	15	1	4	3
19	Tamil Nadu	6	1	nil	1
20	Uttaranchal	5	nil	nil	nil
21	Uttar Pradesh	20	1	nil	2
22	West Bengal	8	1	nil	2
	TOTAL:	199	20	18	38